EML Accent

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Mansfield University
English and Modern Languages Newsletter

## Review: The Blending of Space and Time

–By Rosalie C. Mackay

Assia Djebar's film *La Nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua,* demonstrates the strength, perseverance, and the voice of a female culture that still exists today. This antiquated film conveys a sense of 'something cherished.' Real Berber women reenacting the plight of their people was powerful. The blending of space and time was intriguing as well and symbolic. The beginning of the film starts with a wide scope then narrows in to close proximity of the intimate space of

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## My Time at MacDowell

–By Louise Sullivan-Blum

Editor's note: *Professor Sullivan-Blum is on sabbatical leave for the Spring 2014 semester. She was awarded an eight week writing residency fellowship at the prestigious MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, where she worked on her latest novel.*

I arrive at the MacDowell Colony after dark, having made my way across the mountains of Vermont on a two-lane highway in driving snow, carrying three boxes of books, a crate of essential files, a draft of my manuscript, a suitcase of warm clothes, and four pounds of coffee. I quickly become accustomed to complete solace in my studio (where James Baldwin, Alice Sebold, and Mary Karr have also worked). Breakfast is prepared for me each morning, my lunch is delivered in a picnic basket every day at noon, and dinner is served each night at 6:30. While there, I immerse myself in reading, write every day, make new friends, walk in the woods, do yoga every day, and watch snow fall for entire days at a time. I make fires in my fireplace while I write. My days rotate between profound inspiration, absolute euphoria, and bone-chilling failure of nerve. There are days I struggle to write a paragraph, and others where I revise two or three chapters in a matter of hours. I stagger out of the woods two months later with a 400 page manuscript of 111,000 words (too long, alas, as always far too long) that will inevitably require much, much more revision before I am done. It has been two months since ventured outside of a two-mile radius. Two months since I last listened to the news. I feel simultaneously guilty and serene. Terrible things have happened in the world, and they have not touched me. I feel blessedly un-depressed. I say my good-byes and head for home. The work, I fear, has only just begun.

Please, send news, announcements, and contributions to:

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## The Blending of Space and Time

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home. The *impotent man* watches helplessly as Lila is in her own world of caring forself and her daughter: man on the outside, yet always close. Her world is private yet opened for all to see. Djebar uses narrative, memories, and dreams to depict the Algerian revolution and sings the praises of Algerian heroes and heroines.

Outside the house, the village, the town, and into the city Lila meanders in and out space and time as she searches for her family member's death. The Berber women help to guide her on this quest. From the cave of waiting to the fields of grain the local women work together to explain what happens and to comfort Lila as well. They cook outside, draw water from wells outside; they sit outside for meals and companionship. Always outside, outside the world, outside of the other continent, outside of the human race.

Djebar portrays life outside of the home many times during the film: baking bread in a community oven, sharing in the fellowship of food and friendship, of family and home. The children's job seemed to be drawing water from the wells outside. Children drawing on the hope of the future as they pour out the essence of life. The Berber women of Mt. Chenoua share in this hope as they wash their faces with the water, then offer their child a drink from the palms of their hands. The female ancestry continues to nourish the young.

Through this *nouba* (oral narrative), Djebar takes the audience on a journey with Lila to discover the events that took place during the Algerian Revolution. Throughout the film, the events travel through time, back and forth from the past to her present and for us, the future. The film maker is able to tie all the elements of time as she remembers the past, while dealing with problems of the present; she often looks out across the land from a mountain or high position. She is looking into the future.

*La nouba* is a story that has been waiting so long to be told. The viewer can feel the passion, even with Lila's flat affect. There is very little facial expression, but the passion runs deep like the wells of Chenoua. Silence speaks volumes as the sister sits in the tree waiting. After she witnesses the death of her brother no words can express the pain in her heart. The heavy weight of the truth hangs like a thick blanket over the Berber village, over Algeria, over Assia Djebar. She is still the voice crying out for the captives to be set free. Maybe one day she will be heard.

*Note: This film is in the MU's DVD collection. Check it out!*

Editor's Note: *Rosalie Mackay is a student in Dr. Linda Rashidi's ENG 3305: African Literature, which is an elective in the Women's Studies Minor.*

## EML Student Awards

A number of EML students have been awarded academic prizes for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Outstanding Achievement in 1st year French: **Taylor Stupksi**

Outstanding Achievement in 2nd year French: **Kathryn Janover**

Outstanding Achievement in 1st year German: **Heath Degaramo, Jourdan Buckheit**

Outstanding Achievement in 2nd year German: **Chelsi Wood**

Outstanding Modern Language major: **Jenna Alderman**

Henry Dyck Award for Outstanding Achievement in History of the English Language: **Hunter Hill**

Bernie Koloski Award for Outstanding Achievement in American Literature: **Miranda Peery**

Larry K. Uffleman Award for Outstanding Achievement in British Literature: **Emily Smith**

Outstanding English major: **Courtney Wark**

Outstanding Senior in English: **Rachel Sterling**

Two English majors, **Melissa Walker** and **Chelsi Wood**, have won a North Hall Prize for outstanding student essays that use North Hall library resources and services. Melissa Walker is a freshman English major, and her essay, "Perceptions of Beauty in 'Beauty and the Beast,'" originally submitted for FYS 1100 Grimm Variations, won the short paper category. Chelsi Wood is a graduating English major, and her essay, "Elizabeth the Rhetor: The Makings of a Female King,'" originally submitted for HST 4496 Senior Seminar, won the long paper category.

## Graduating Seniors' Plans for the Future

**Curtis Evans** will be focusing on his fiction writing and attempting to get some of it published.

**Matthew Getz** will be applying for teaching positions and plans to work as a substitute teacher in the Lycoming county school districts.

**Jordan Hallock** plans to teach English abroad in either Europe or South America after graduating. He plans on continuing his Spanish studies while abroad and teaching both English and Spanish in the future.

**Marta Knapp** intends to apply for a teaching position in Costa Rica after graduation.

**Olivia Mishler** is student teaching in Alaska. She plans to return to New York and seek her New York Certification as well as an English Second Language Certificate.

**Cameron Murphy** has been accepted to St. John's University to study for his M.A. in English.

**Emily Smith** plans to become both a writer and an editor after education. She hopes to eventually own a publishing house in order to give inspirational and abstract writers a louder voice within our society.

**Emily Wolfel** plans to start an MFA program in January for Fiction Writing and later plans to pursue a Master's and PhD in English Literature.

**Chelsi Wood** will be attending Marywood University in order to earn a Master's degree in Teaching English and History.

## News from Abroad

–By Monique Oyallon

Last year (the summer and fall of 2013) has seen a good participation in study-abroad programs, with several of our English and Modern Languages students, Jordan Hallock (BSE English) and Marta Knapp (English and Spanish BSE), participating in a six-weeks intensive Spanish course in the Universidad Blas Pascal in Argentina, and Hannah Lopez (BA Spanish) spending six weeks at the Universidad Pública de Navarra in Spain. Hannah continues her stay in Spain for the 2013–2014 academic year and is currently studying at the university in Almería. Finally, Jeffrey Johnson is completing his BA in Spanish this Spring at the Universidad de Murcia.

Marta and Jordan are applying to an internship program offered by the Universidad Alfonso X el Sabio for elementary and secondary education graduates (in English or Spanish). If selected, they will be trained to be teacher assistants for the university's partner schools in Madrid.

Students from other departments at MU are also using some of the options offered by the International Student Exchange Programs (ISEP) network in Italy (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), India (University of Hyderabad), Finland (the University of Helsinki and the Abo Akademi), Sweden (Mälardalen University), and Scotland (Napier University).

As in previous academic years, one can study Spanish, German, or French in any semester at universities in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France, as well as in the Reunion Island and the French Antilles (Guadeloupe and Martinique).

One can also study Russian at the University of Latvia, Polish at Wroclaw University, and Arabic at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

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The Pitfalls of Studying Abroad

## Shakespeare Field Trip to see *Titus Andronicus* at Cornell University.

–By Ed Washington

On Saturday, February 8, 2014, Dr. Ed Washington, English, arranged for a group of 13 students, faculty members, and friends to attend a stage production of Shakespeare's revenge tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, at the Cornell University Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts in Ithaca, New York.

Dr. Washington drove a University van filled with present and past Shakespeare students to the play. The English department graciously covered the cost of transportation. The group departed from MU campus at 10:00 on Saturday morning. Students had two hours on their own to explore the Cornell campus and local college eateries in College Town. The play started 2:00 p.m. and the group returned to campus by 7:00 p.m. the same day.

Everyone agreed that the play was outstanding, especially for a university production where all but one of the cast members were students; and where half of the actors were not theater majors. Much credit for the fine production goes to student director, Spencer Wale: he filled the stage with fast- paced action and featured many striking props that percolated with significance. Wale made the 400-year-old play come alive for a contemporary audience. In the impromptu talk-back session with the cast after the play, an MU student commented on the quality of the acting; the lead player responded that the cast had worked together for a year and had jelled beautifully with this director for this production.

The playgoers all agreed that the Cornell production of *Titus Andronicus* was an excellent piece of theater which encouraged them to attend more plays in the future. Those participating in the field trip included: Courtney Wark, Zach Minier, Kat Drexler, Chelsi Wood, Joshua Wood, Emily Wolfel, John Dubel, Ben Hockenberry, Emily Hockenberry, Rachel Sterling, Krysta Fuller, Curtis Evans, Dr. Rashidi, and Dr. Washington.

Linda Stump Rashidi

## Retiree Profile

–By Lynn Pifer

After earning a B.A. in liberal arts from College of Wooster and an M.S. in education from Syracuse University, Linda Stump Rashidi began her career in the Peace Corps, teaching at Kabul University in Afghanistan. She also taught English as a second language in Tokyo, Japan, before returning to the states to earn her M.A. in English linguistics and her Ph.D. in linguistics from Michigan State University. She taught at Alma College, Jilin Teachers College in China, and Al Akhawayn University of Ifrane in Morocco before coming to Mansfield University in 1999. We have benefited from her linguistic skill and knowledge of the world ever since.

Dr. Rashidi has been an active member of the English and Modern Languages department, teaching English Grammar, History of the English Language, Modern African Writers, and an Introduction to Linguistics course that she designed for our university. She is the author of a book, (Re)constructing Reality: Complexity in Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*. (2005 by Peter Lang) and the editor of a special issue of the journal *Languages and Linguistic*, titled "Language and Gender in Islam" (2002). She has also published several scholarly articles and traveled to conferences around the world to give presentations

Since she is retiring at the end of the spring semester, EML Accent has asked Dr. Rashidi to tell us a little about her career at Mansfield (and around the world).

What was the most exciting or rewarding experience you've had abroad?

Places where I have taught outside the USA (in this order):

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Linda Stump Rashidi

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India (an orphanage in Bombay), Afghanistan (Kabul University), Japan (Tokyo English Center), China (Jilin Teachers College), Morocco (al-Akhawayn University), and Bulgaria (Sophia University). Afghanistan was certainly the experience that I cherish the most, for a number of reasons. First, I was young and idealistic, and still thought that I could change the world. This was 1967; Afghanistan was at peace and a place nobody had heard of-except WTs (those hashish-smoking world travelers) and my fellow PCVs (Peace Corps Volunteers). It was a time and place of innocence, and I felt free in a way I have not felt since. But my job at Kabul University as a teacher trainer was one of enormous prestige (a heady experience for a 20-something): I was responsible for training women teachers and placing them in girls' schools around the country. Second, Afghanistan is a country of breathtaking beauty, something that all those newscasts miss. I remember flying into Kabul airport over the Hindu Kush; the moment I alighted, I felt at home, like I had landed exactly where I belonged. I fell in love with a country-and later its people. Third, it was in Afghanistan that I discovered that I could function in a foreign language, a life-changing experience. Fourth, in Afghanistan I also discovered that I loved teaching--that this was something that I was good at-and that I was captivated, mesmerized by linguistics.

What's your most memorable teaching moment (at Mansfield or elsewhere)?

I am a grammar freak; I could spend every waking moment 'doing grammar' in any number of languages. And I have so enjoyed teaching English Grammar here at MU. I'm not sure I have one most-memorable moment, but those days when a classroom full of students gets charged with analyzing a sentence, arguing for their own interpretation, challenging each other with difficult structures is a pure joy that I will miss. One of my lasting memories is of Max and Jason nearly coming to blows over competing analyses. Marta was literally out of her chair ready to separate them! Grammar boring stuff about where to put your commas? Never.

Since coming to Mansfield, you created ENG 1175 Intro to Linguistics. What other new courses have you taught here?

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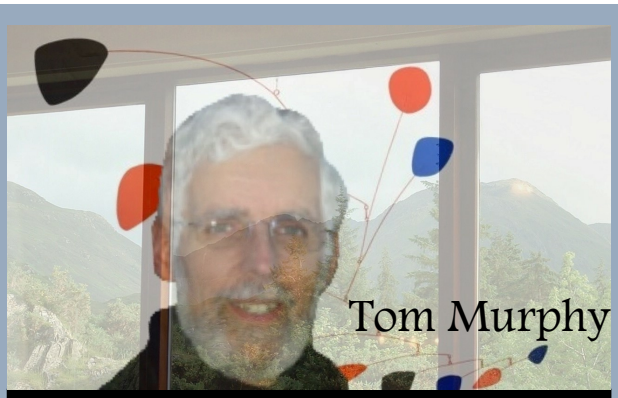


## Retiree Profile

–By Lynn Pifer

**Dr. Thomas Murphy** has been a professor at Mansfield since 1990. He holds a B.A. in English from Fordham University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Ohio State University. His teaching specialties have been in British Literature, particularly Old and Middle English, and in Nature Writing. He has designed and offered a wide variety of courses while at Mansfield, including The Films of Terry Gilliam, Films of Coen Brothers, King Arthur and Robin Hood, and a Senior Seminar on Chivalry.

Tom has published numerous nature writing essays, and has co-edited *Literature, Writing, and the Natural World* with Jimmy Guignard (2009). His essay, "The Feeder Tree: An Album," from his collection, *Thirteen Sugar Maples,* was selected as a finalist for *Elsewhere's* Scott Russell Sanders Prize for nonfiction in 2008.

**EML: You worked for a long time outside of academia. Why did you leave your previous career to teach at Mansfield?**

It was 1988 and I was working as Assistant to the Vice President of Labor Relations for Consolidated Rail Corporation in Philadelphia. I was forty-four and had been working for Conrail since 1976 (after teaching at DePaul University for a year). I did not conceive of myself as a business executive, but I realized that our three children had known me as only that. Between the commute and my work day I was gone for 12 hours a day.

My wife Madalene and I began to talk about how we were living and then included the kids in the conversation. We thought that we could simplify our lives and get along with less so that we might be more flexible with what I could do. Finding a teaching job seemed unlikely, so I began to do

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(Continued from page 5) Tom Murphy

some freelance writing and we started to grow more of our own food to see if we could do it. One incident happened during this time that solidified my resolve. I was offered the job of Assistant to the President; this involved working directly with the president of the company for two years and then being placed in a relatively senior position somewhere in the company. I decided not to take it because we were starting to craft our escape and this job would be a time sink. I made an appointment with the president and as I walked in the door and across the floor of his large office on the top floor of the building, he reached under the top of his desk and flipped a switch and across the room the door closed. As I sat down in the chair, I realized this was not my world and I was well out of it.

We settled on Northern PA, were taken by Wellsboro, found an old farmhouse and some land, sold our 18th century stone farmhouse in Bucks County, I quit my job, and we moved to Tioga county. I put my name in to teach at MU, not expecting much to come of it, but much did.

**EML: What's your most memorable teaching moment?**

It is hard to identify a most memorable one. The moments I like the most are when the light goes on for students:

- the student who has grown up in a world where pain is bad and should be medicated out of existence, but who reads the fifteenth-century mystic Julian of Norwich's *Showings* and sees how suffering can be ennobling and instill insight;
- or the student who has hunted deer all his life, writing with excitement about how beautiful the one is that he is observing closely.

I also enjoy when I suggest to students that they explore further an issue in a piece they have written, and they do and end up in a surprising new place so that a good piece of writing becomes excellent.

The best times in the classroom are when I see afterwards that what I was doing and what the students were doing formed a complete whole, and something flamed out like shining from shook foil. I like Parker Palmer's metaphor of subject-centered teaching, which emphasizes that neither the teacher nor the student is the center of activity, but the subject as a living presence that engages everyone. That apotheosis does not often happen, especially on dreary Monday mornings, but when it does, it lights up the room and everyone in it.

After retirement, Dr. Murphy and his wife will move to Massachusetts. Best wishes and happy trails, Tom!

(Continued from page 5) Linda Stump Rashidi

ENG 1175: Nature of Language is actually a course I taught at Central Michigan University when I was an adjunct there. I also taught this course (a non-technical look at language and how it functions in our daily lives) at al-Akhawayn University in Morocco. But as I developed it for our students, I kept in mind that this course is also an anthropology course. And since I am essentially an anthropological linguist, I built in lots of field research. In fact, field work (in its many forms) is a big component of all my language courses, as well as my Comp I course. I like to have students go out and get their hands dirty, so to speak.

Besides being the residing linguist, I have also taught a number of literature courses, all revolving around Islam, North Africa, and/or women. I suppose my other narrow field of interest (besides grammar) is the intersection of language, gender, and religion. So here at MU, I have created and taught: African Literature, Women and Islam, Women Writing the non-Western World, and Humanities I: the Islamic World. Today in African Lit, we began our discussion of Naguib Mahfouz's Arabian Nights and Days; within an hour, as we talked about the metaphysical underpinnings of the text, students brought in the Koran, the Bible, Greek mythology, and the Bagavad Gita. It is a small world.

And, of course, what are your plans for retirement?

My plan for retirement is that I have no plan. It may surprise those of you that know my penchant for plunking myself down alone in remote locales, but my first plan of travel is a slow drive up through New England in the Fall. After that I may go to Romania.

## Poetry Out Loud at MU

–By Ed Washington

For the second year running, the Mansfield University English Department has worked with the Bradford County Regional Arts Council (BCRAC) to bring the nationally-acclaimed Poetry Out Loud (POL) recitation contest to the MU campus, February, 2014. Dr. Ed Washington, English, worked this year with Cat Badger and Jennifer Swain of BCRAC to provide a welcoming atmosphere for POL in MU's Allen Hall Auditorium.

POL is a National Endowment for the Arts / Poetry Endowment-sponsored competition for high school students who recite renowned poems before an audience. Through the program, students get a chance to read and comprehend great poetry, to hone their public speaking skills, and to build confidence in their ability to follow through on a long term project that has the potential to open up further opportunities for academic and occupational growth. Regional winners move on to the statewide competition in Harrisburg, and state winners go on to compete nationally. Expenses to state and national events are paid for by NEA, cash prizes are awarded to state and national winners, and schools sponsoring these winners and runners up receive cash awards to purchase poetry books for their libraries.

This year, the English department expanded its involvement with the program by working with BCRAC to enlist the services of the MU student public relations organization (PRSSA), to schedule opening remarks by English department chair, Dr. Teri Doerksen, and by arranging for an intermission presentation by students from the MU literary writers club (SWAP). Judges slated for the competition included Dr. Ed Washington, Ms. Lilace Guignard, and Mr. Mitch Goldwater, all members of the MU English department. Additionally, on behalf of the English department, Dr. Washington solicited a larger involvement by the MU Admissions Office to use the MU/POL collaboration as a recruiting tool for prospective students, especially aspiring English majors and Creative Writing minors. Janet Yoder, admissions counselor (and MU English major), agreed to work with the English department to incorporate the POL event into the Admissions Office's repertoire of marketing tools to bring talented students to MU.

Alas, despite the many hours of planning and arranging, bad weather caused the cancellation of POL at the MU site this year. The competition did take place at BCRAC in Towanda the following week—but plans are already underway to bring the contest back to MU next year. The regional winner went on to compete in Harrisburg in March and the State-wide contest will occur later this month.

Questions about the POL program at MU may be directed to Dr. Ed Washington, coordinator, at ewashing@mansfield.edu.

## Annotating Carlyle

–By John Ulrich

This academic year, I have been granted a sabbatical leave to co-edit a volume of essays by the Victorian writer Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). The book is part of the *Strouse Edition of the Works of Thomas Carlyle*, a series of volumes published by the University of California Press. The volume I'm working on, Carlyle's *Essays on Politics and Society*, gathers together twenty-two of Carlyle's essays published over a fifty-year span, from the 1820s to the 1870s.

Thomas Carlyle was a highly influential, but also controversial, Victorian prose writer whose impact was felt on both sides of the Atlantic. He was widely known (and sometimes vilified) for his thunderingly prophetic rhetorical style and his indignant expressions of moral outrage. Although Carlyle was acknowledged as a major figure by his contemporaries, scholars and students interested in studying Carlyle today face a major obstacle: the lack of fully annotated, textually authoritative editions of his writings. This is most unfortunate, for Carlyle's rhetorical style is difficult and highly allusive, steeped in references to people, events, and ideas from the ancients to the Victorians. In his books and essays, Carlyle frequently alludes to politics, economics, literature, history, art, science, religion, philosophy, and philology, sometimes all in the same paragraph! The Strouse edition volumes address this gap in scholarship; in addition to providing the reader with accurate, authoritative texts and an accessible introduction, each volume includes full annotations for Carlyle's many references and allusions, as well as historical collations of any textual variants and emendations.

My co-editors are Dr. Chris Vanden Bossche, professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, and Dr. Lowell T. Frye, Elliott Professor of Rhetoric and Humanities at Hampden-Sydney College. Dr. Frye and I are responsible for annotating the essays and writing the introduction to the volume. For my portion of the project, I am annotating Carlyle's "Signs of the Times" (1829), "The Death of the Rev. Edward Irving" (1835), "Chartism" (1839), "The Opera" (1852), "Suggestions for a National Exhibition of Scottish Portraits" (1855), "Illias (Americana) in Nuce" (1863), "Inaugural Address" (1866), "Letter on the War Between Germany and France" (1870), and "The Portraits of John Knox" (1875). To date, I have drafted over 1,000 annotations – more than 200 pages worth.

So what exactly gets annotated? We compose notes for all direct and indirect references to people, places, and historical events, as well as references to contemporary events and material culture; for all direct quotations from, paraphrases of, or allusions to a wide variety of previously published material in several languages; for all direct quotations or allusions to contemporary newspaper and journal articles; and for all words, phrases, or ideas frequently used by Carlyle throughout his writings (including 30 volumes of his published work and 40+ volumes of correspondence).

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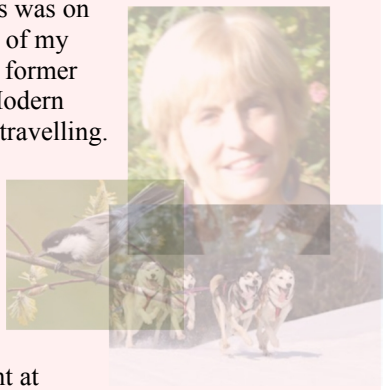
## Can't Stop Teaching Writing

–By Judith Sornberger

I have always thought that it would be fun to teach without having to grade. Nirvana, right? But I have to admit that my first thought when I retired was not about finding new venues for teaching. My focus was on writing, healing from the loss of my husband, Dr. Bruce Barton (a former member of the English and Modern Languages Department), and travelling. Since May I've travelled to Whidbey Island in the Puget Sound, to Kansas and Nebraska to visit family, to Salem, MA, with my son Jamie, and to Finland with my friend Dr. Shawn Holderby (History Department at MU). I've had lots of fun, including driving a dogsled inside the Arctic Circle, but once a teacher . . .



One of my former students (an MU graduate) posted on Facebook that she was having trouble with her writing and wondered if I might want to work on it with her. Other graduates--English majors, Creative Writing Minors, and Women's Studies minors--had talked of how they missed writing and lacked the motivation to go it on their own. Enter one former English/Poetry/Women's Studies professor who sort of missed teaching. I don't mean the overwhelming load of teaching four courses a semester, attending department and other meetings, and grading endless stacks of papers. I mean working with

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## Annotating Carlyle

Writing annotations for a scholarly edition can be a highly gratifying experience—it's quite like detective work—but the process is tremendously time-consuming, necessitating careful and thorough research, a good deal of patience, and clear, precise, and concise prose. Notes must attend to the contextual use of the word or phrase in the essay, and not merely identify a person, place, or quotation out of context. For example, when Carlyle alludes in "Signs of the Times" to Pierre Jean George Cabanis's *Rapports du Physique et du Morale de l'Homme*, the editor needs to compose a note that illuminates Carlyle's assertion that "[Cabanis] fairly lays open our moral structure with his dissecting knives and real metal probes," and not merely report on the identity of Cabanis and the bibliographic facts of his *Rapports* (though these would also, of course, be included in the note).

My sabbatical project will conclude this summer, and I'll return to full-time teaching in Fall 2014. I look forward to sharing the knowledge and experience I've gained with my students, not only in courses focused on British literature, but also in the many courses I teach in which research is a vital component.

## Faculty Spotlight:

**Dr. Teri Doerksen** presented her paper "*Clarissa Harlowe* and the appropriation of Catholic iconography" in the New Approaches to Samuel Richardson colloquium at the ASECS (American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies) conference in Williamsburg, VA, in March. The colloquium included eleven Richardson scholars sharing summaries of their current work; papers were circulated in advance and the panel session was spent discussing the work in progress.

**Lilace Guignard's** poem, "Packing Up My Parents' House," appears in the latest issue of *Louisiana Literature*. She also has two poems forthcoming in *Paterson Literary Review*: "Beebalm on the Dooryard" and "Evergreen."

**Dr. Andrea Harris** will present a paper at the American Literature Association Convention in Washington, D.C. in May. Her paper will be part of the Edith Wharton Society panel and is entitled " 'A Ruin of a Man': Non-Normative Masculinity in *Ethan Frome*." She also has an essay in submission entitled "Surviving My Father" at *River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative*. In April, she will give a presentation, "Using Feminism to Queer the Straight Classroom" at the Black Students Union 2nd Annual Operation Ambition Conference at Mansfield University

**Dr. Bradley Holtman**, Professor of German and French, has two book reviews going to press for the spring 2014 issue of *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*. This publication is the official journal of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG). Dr. Holtman is a frequent contributor to the journal as a reviewer, providing detailed information to colleagues in German about new pedagogical and reference publications in both German and Dutch. Dr. Holtman has long been involved with the Dutch language and the culture of the Netherlands and Belgium. In fact, his subspecialty within his Germanic linguistics Ph.D. was Dutch, and he spent a year in Groningen, The Netherlands, on a Fulbright research grant. Dr. Holtman loves to bring knowledge of this relatively unfamiliar language and culture to a broader audience, so he was delighted when the *Unterrichtspraxis* journal first

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## Faculty Spotlight:

began to accept contributions about works dealing with Netherlandic language and culture alongside German. Since that time, he has reviewed two Dutch grammars, three Dutch language courses, and with the current two articles a frequency dictionary of Dutch and an intermediate-level reader for students of the language. He is also under contract for review of a new English-language history of the Dutch language to be published in the fall 2014 issue. Aside from book reviews, Dr. Holtman translated into English a novel by the noted Dutch author A.F.Th. van der Heijden and is seeking a publisher for the manuscript. He has in recent years delivered three papers based on this author and on his translation of the novel.

**Prof. Ed Kozaczka** attended the ASECS (American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies) conference in Williamsburg, VA in March. He gave two talks: "Queer Mediations," which was a part of a roundtable titled, "Queer Theory in the Eighteenth Century?" and "Elusive Allusions: Self-Inflicted Torture and Female Sexuality in the 1720s." He also gave a lecture entitled "Queer Anarchies" in Allen Hall this March. Ed's scholarly edition of Penelope Aubin's novel, *The Noble Slaves*, is forthcoming in December 2014. This April, Ed will give a presentation, "Professing Queerness," at the Black Students Union 2nd Annual Operation Ambition Conference at Mansfield University in April. Andrea Harris and Ed Kozaczka have also organized the panel: "Queer in the Straight Classroom" with five students from various departments:

1. Cierra Peters, "My Sexual Preference is Never" (a talk about asexuality)
2. Dana Kushner, "Social Ignorance & LGBTQ Students"
3. Jay Biernat, "Challenges Faced by Transgender Students in the Classroom"
4. Jessica Ryerson, "Elementary Questions for the Adult Mind"
5. Brooke Reinhardt, "FAFSA & Queer Education"

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## Can't Stop Teaching Writing

students who are so excited about writing that they do it even if it has nothing to do with earning credit toward a degree.

So I proposed a writing workshop: six Tuesday night workshops in my home for which the students pay a relatively small registration fee. I provide tea, writing prompts, and sample writings (so far, poems and flash creative nonfiction), and, of course, oracular wisdom. We write together, read aloud, laugh and cry. Participants also bring poems and other writings they've worked on during the week, and we discuss them. We are on our second series of workshops now, and I look forward to them each week. I currently have seven participants--six former MU students and one community member who discovered our little secret and asked to join. Participants have included the following MU students: Bobbie Van Druff, Rebecca Webster, Crystal Batista, Chris Rinnert, Terry Babb, April Ganong Thorwardson, and Daisy Jelliff-Bennett.

I feel lucky to work with so many talented and passionate writers, fellow pilgrims on the writing path. But, really, it feels more like play--sacred play--the way writing itself can feel at the best of times.

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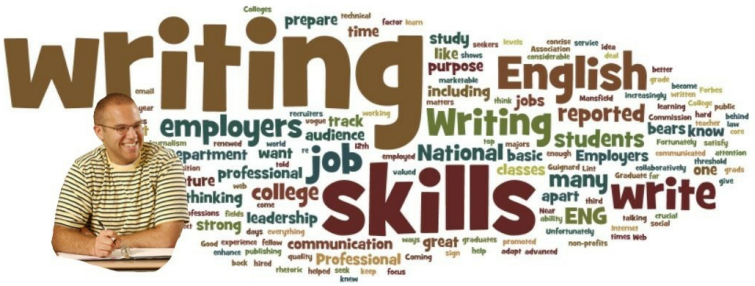



## Professional Writing: Coming Soon to an English Department Near You

–By Jimmy Guignard and Brad Lint

I write all the time for my job. *So?* you think, *You're an English teacher. You should write all the time for your job*. That's probably true, but what would you say if I told you that most of the stuff I write, I didn't learn how to write until I took my job? Fortunately, I had enough command of skills like researching, thinking about purpose and audience, and writing collaboratively that I could adapt what I knew about writing about literature to satisfy other purposes. The longer I teach at Mansfield, the more I appreciate how the study of English and rhetoric helped prepare me for one of the most important tasks for many jobs these days: writing.

Simply put, quality writing has become one of the most valued skills for employers across all industries and professions. Research bears this out. The National Commission on Writing found that writing is a "threshold skill." Employers increasingly consider "soft skills" (including writing, critical thinking, leadership, and collaboration) to be as crucial as "hard skills" in any job. The National Association of Colleges and Employers ranks written communication third behind "ability to work in a team" and "leadership" in its list of top skills employers seek in college grads. A 2011 Graduate Management Admission Council survey reported that 86% of corporate recruiters value strong communication skills – including writing – far and above other all other skills. The renewed focus on writing is in many ways a sign of the times. As *Forbes* magazine reported last year, "Writing skills are back in vogue, as nearly everything is communicated through web pages, social media, and email marketing. In the Internet world, great writing skills can set you apart from fellow job seekers and keep you employed."

Good writing that shows attention to purpose and audience and is clear, concise, and grammatically correct can be the deciding factor in getting to the interview stage, and, once hired, being promoted. My own experience talking with graduates bears this out. No matter their major, writing matters. Unfortunately, the preparation students receive before they come to college doesn't cut it. The National Assessment of Education Statistics reported in 2012 that only 24% of students at the 8th and 12th grade levels write proficiently; 54% were ranked "basic," 20% "below basic," and only 3% "advanced." College composition classes, then, are not just about learning to write better in college: they help you to build valuable, marketable skills that will set you apart and give you a competitive edge in the marketplace.

The English Department is working on developing a professional writing track that would provide a strong core in the study of literature and writing while offering classes like ENG 3371: Professional Writing, ENG 3400: The Editorial Process, and ENG 3404: Writing for the Web. The idea is to prepare English students for a range of jobs that emphasize writing in publishing, non-profits, journalism, law, public service, technical writing, and many other fields. We believe a professional writing track will further develop the already considerable writing skills English majors acquire in our program. In short, we want to enhance your skills. We know you'll have a great deal to offer employers. We want employers to know it, too.

## News from Abroad

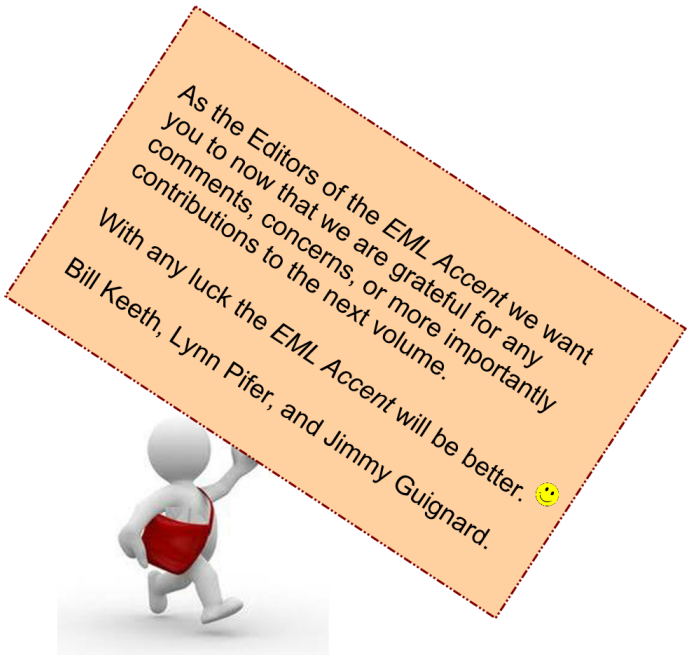
(Continued from page 3)

Students can also elect to visit China (Hong Kong or Nanchang), where they will find opportunities to study Mandarin Chinese.

Multiple locations across the world offer a large selection of courses in English as well as introduction to lesser-taught languages and cultures. MU students can study and practice music at Lulea University in Sweden, study and volunteer in Ghana, or discover one of the oldest universities in Europe (Tartu, Estonia).

MU one-on-one partnerships with Charles Sturt University in Australia, the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Toulouse, France, or Friedrich-Schiller-Universitat in Jena, Germany, allows more flexibility and a range of other options.

Next year, the department will propose a new study-abroad opportunity, under the form of a short-term "embedded" program in France: "Paris, the City Experience." This ten-day study tour led by Dr. Monique Oyallon will allow interested students to receive credit. During the stay in Paris, the group will focus on experiencing and describing life in the city (parks, cafés, monuments), getting to know famous neighborhoods in Paris (Latin Quarter, Notre Dame, Montmartre, the gardens around the Eiffel Tower), visiting museums (the Louvre, and other collections), and getting a sense of working and creating things in Paris (visit a business or take a cooking class).


As the Editors of the EML Accent we want you to now that we are grateful for any comments, concerns, or more importantly contributions to the next volume.
With any luck the EML Accent will be better.
Bill Keeth, Lynn Pifer, and Jimmy Guignard.

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## Faculty Spotlight:

**Dr. Lynn Pifer** will present a lecture/workshop entitled "Civil Rights SSDD: Same Sh*t, Different Decade," examining the struggle for voting rights in the U.S. before and after the Voting Rights Act of 1965, at the Black Students Union 2nd Annual Operation Ambition Conference at Mansfield University. Dr. Pifer is also a reader for *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* this semester.

**Lynn Pifer** and **Linda Rashidi** were presented with President's Commission on the Staus of Women Mentor Awards this April. Dr. Pifer was nominated by English major, Miranda Peery, and Dr. Rashidi was nominated by English major, Rachel Roupp.

**Dr. Edward Washington** gave a paper at the *22nd Annual National Association of African American Studies Conference* in Baton Rouge, LA, February, 2014. The conference paper was entitled: "'What Cares Caliban for the Name of Kings': Authority from Below in Shakespeare's *The Tempest.*"

**Morning at the Window**

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.
The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
A tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

**Madrugada tras la ventana**

En las cocinas del sótano agitan los platos de desayuno,
y a lo largo de los bordes pisoteados de la vereda
soy consciente de las almas empapadas de las mucamas
que surgen con desánimo por los portales.
En mi alrededor las olas marrones de neblina me lanzan
desde el fondo de la calle las caras torcidas,
y la lágrima de una transeúnte con falda embarrada.
Una sonrisa merodea sin rumbo en el aire
y luego desaparece al llegar al techo.

*Poems* (1920) – T.S. Eliot
Traducción de Bill Keeth